

behind the brown spot

Dark marks, brown spots & more: hyperpigmentation, demystified.



Brown spots have a major influence on how old people think we are. In fact, one study showed that unbalanced skin tone can make a person look more than 12 years older! The big questions: **where do they come from, and what can you do about them?**

It helps to understand the science behind brown spots. The official term for brown spots and other forms of skin discoloration is hyperpigmentation. Unlike freckles, hyperpigmentation doesn't fade in winter and, unfortunately, it becomes more visible as we age.

But what causes it? Irregular production of melanin (the brown or reddish pigment in skin). Certain triggers – unprotected sun exposure in particular – causes this irregular production, which leads to surface color-clumping. Other causes include hormonal factors (birth control pills and pregnancy), and post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation (PIH) caused by past trauma or scarring (think a popped pimple or a deep cut). Hormonal hyperpigmentation and PIH are both intensified by sun exposure.

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So, what to do about it? Here's how to figure out what's causing your brown spots – and take action.

call in the experts

Ask a Dermalogica skin therapist for a free Face Mapping® skin analysis and consultation to get to the root of your brown spots. Knowing your personal triggers will reveal the best treatment. They can even recommend professional treatments that can help you banish dark spots faster!

apply SPF daily

Sunscreen helps prevent UV light from bringing new spots to the surface – and it also helps control the color intensity of the spots you can see. Wear it daily to make the most of the treatments you try – spending just 30 minutes unprotected in the sun can undo a month's worth of effort in fighting hyperpigmentation!

know your ingredients

There are a number of ingredients that can help address hyperpigmentation, but **Vitamin C stands out as one of the most powerful**. As one of the most potent antioxidants available, it's highly effective at scavenging free radicals. New research shows that it can also enhance skin's natural defense system, helping it defend itself against future oxidative stress – effectively brightening skin from inside and out. Just make sure to choose a Vitamin C formula that's both ultra-stable and highly bioavailable.

be patient

There's no quick fix for hyperpigmentation: it can take at least 30 days of skin care treatment (with sunscreen use) before you see any progress. Additionally, some spots may look darker before they lighten; this is because they gradually rise to the skin's surface as you continue to exfoliate. But stick with it, and you'll eventually see brighter, firmer, more radiant skin!